

1 14-21 - INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING - GRAND RAPIDS

2 JULY 24, 2014 - 6:00 P.M.

3 FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION,

4 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,

5 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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7
8 In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a
9 Route Permit for the Great Northern High-Voltage
10 Transmission Line Project from Manitoba, Canada -
Minnesota Border to the Blackberry Substation near Grand
Rapids, Minnesota

11 PUC DOCKET NO. E-015/TL-14-21

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15 Sawmill Inn
16 2301 Pokegama Avenue South
17 Grand Rapids, Minnesota

18 July 24, 2014

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25 COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

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1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Again, good evening
2 and welcome, everyone.

3 My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm the public
4 advisor with the Minnesota Public Utilities
5 Commission.

6 And we're here for the public information
7 and scoping meeting for the route permit for
8 Minnesota Power's proposed Great Northern
9 Transmission Line Project.

10 On this opening slide I've listed the
11 Commission's docket number, which is sort of the key
12 to finding information with our office, that's how
13 we track everything in our world, is by this docket
14 number. So it's an important number to have.

15 Briefly, what we're going to go over
16 tonight, we're going to start talking about the
17 roles and process for the route permit application.
18 And I'll be talking about that, as will the U.S.
19 Department of Energy. Minnesota Power will provide
20 a brief summary of the proposed project. The
21 Department of Commerce and the Department of Energy
22 will talk about the environmental review process.
23 And then the main event, of course, is your comments
24 and questions.

25 So, briefly, the Public Utilities

1 Commission is a state agency and we are responsible
2 for regulating various aspects related to the energy
3 and telecommunications industries, including routing
4 for transmission lines.

5 We have five commissioners that are
6 appointed by the governor. They serve staggered
7 terms, so we don't get a whole new batch every time
8 we get a new governor, they are kind of staggered
9 throughout. And for those Commissioners it is
10 full-time employment. They're not, you know, like a
11 small-town city council where they might have a few
12 meetings a month or that type of thing, they're
13 actually in the office Monday through Friday, 40
14 hours a week like the rest of us. And we also have
15 about 50 staff.

16 A little bit more about who's who in this
17 process. First off, we have the applicant. That's
18 what we call the company that's asking for the route
19 permit. So in this case that's Minnesota Power. So
20 if you hear the term applicant, that's who we're
21 talking about.

22 We also have the Department of Commerce,
23 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis, which you
24 might see abbreviated as EERA. They're another
25 state agency and their job is to conduct the

1 environmental review for this project.

2 Later on in the process we will ask an
3 administrative law judge from the Office of
4 Administrative Hearings to get involved in this
5 process. And their job is to do sort of the
6 fact-finding, sort through all the evidence, and
7 ultimately write some recommendations for the Public
8 Utilities Commission, because it is the Commission
9 that will ultimately make the decision about this
10 application for a route permit.

11 We also have the Department of Energy.
12 And their job is to conduct the environmental review
13 when there is a presidential permit application
14 submitted, as there is in this case.

15 At the Public Utilities Commission, which
16 you might see abbreviated as PUC, there are two
17 different staff members that you might be involved
18 with through this process. The first is our energy
19 facilities planner. They're more on the technical
20 side of the project, assist in building the record,
21 collecting those facts, providing information to the
22 Commissioners about the impacts of various options
23 that are on the table and so forth. And then
24 there's the public advisor, and that's me. My job
25 is to work with folks to help you figure out how

1 this process works, when you can weigh in, when you
2 can weigh in, that type of thing. Neither of us at
3 the Commission are giving legal advice. That's not
4 our job, we're not advocating for any one party or
5 position, our job is simply to help you understand
6 the process.

7 So the Public Utilities Commission is
8 involved in this particular project because the
9 state laws call this a high voltage transmission
10 line based on its size and capacity. And so if
11 that's the case, then the law requires a route
12 permit. And so that's what we're here to talk about
13 tonight.

14 The other part of that is a certificate
15 of need. And so in this case, again because of the
16 capacity and the size of this particular project,
17 state law also says that the company needs a
18 certificate of need before they can build this line.
19 And so as you might guess by the name, a certificate
20 of need answers the question is the project needed,
21 where the route permit says, hey, if it's needed,
22 where is it going to go. And so the certificate of
23 need is required first and that's being handled in a
24 separate process. A decision has not yet been made
25 regarding that question of need. So both questions

1 are still open at this point, the need and the
2 route. Some of you might have been here when we
3 were here in February doing something similar to
4 tonight, only about the question of need.

5 So how does the Public Utilities
6 Commission decide on the route? Where is this going
7 to go? Well, the statutes and rules give us a list
8 of factors that the Commission needs to consider.
9 I'm not going to read them, but you can see them
10 here on the screen and on your handout. You can see
11 it's a pretty comprehensive list of various factors.

12 What the statutes and rules don't do is
13 rank them or prioritize them or weight them for us.
14 And so what's going to happen between now and when a
15 decision is made, is folks are going to debate and
16 discuss which of these are most important in various
17 areas across this proposed route.

18 Some terms that you might see in the
19 route permit if one is indeed issued for this
20 project. First of all, we have what we call the
21 permitted route. And so that's sort of a big area,
22 point A to point B, where is that line going to go.
23 The width is going to vary from it could be fairly
24 narrow out to one and a quarter miles. And the
25 reason for that is to allow some flexibility once

1 the company is out there on the ground to actually
2 start construction to kind of work around obstacles
3 or work with landowners to deal with issues that
4 come up that they may not have been able to
5 anticipate.

6 As we move down the page we're going to
7 get to smaller and smaller sizing here. So the next
8 one is the right-of-way. That's the actual amount
9 of land needed within that permitted route to
10 actually build the line and maintain it. And so
11 that's going to be a little bit smaller.

12 And then we get smaller yet to what we
13 call the anticipated alignment. And that's where
14 the company anticipates the line will actually be
15 placed. And we call it anticipated until it's
16 actually built 'cause we don't really know until it
17 happens.

18 If a route permit is issued, of course
19 the company will need land to build it on, right.
20 And so there's several ways that the company will
21 acquire that land. The first is through the
22 easement process. And that's a negotiation between
23 the applicant and the landowner. So, again, the
24 applicant is Minnesota Power in this case. If the
25 easement negotiation doesn't work out, there is also

1 the eminent domain process. And there is a section
2 of law that talks all about that and then that would
3 be referred into the court system to figure out the
4 terms and so forth.

5 Again, I'm not giving legal advice here,
6 I'm simply throwing out the various terms that you
7 might hear through the course of this project so you
8 understand, you know, if you hear these terms
9 somewhere else, you'll know where to go for more
10 information. There's also a handout in the back
11 that you may have picked up on your way in that
12 talks further about these options.

13 The third one is what some people call
14 Buy the Farm. There's a statute that addresses
15 that. And in some cases the landowner may require
16 that the applicant purchase their land instead of
17 just the right-of-way piece. And that applies to
18 specific property types. And, again, I'm not going
19 to get into a lot more detail about that because
20 that will move in to the area of legal advice.

21 Okay. So this is a picture of what the
22 process looks like. Kind of a high level overview,
23 there's certainly some other mini steps that happen
24 in between, but I wanted to give you sort of the
25 high points of what happens next in this process.

1 And so you can see we're in box number
2 two there, the public information and scoping
3 meetings. Tonight is our last one of eight. And
4 then we'll move on into the environmental aspect,
5 which Bill Storm from the Department of Commerce
6 will get into some more detail about.

7 There's also going to be public hearings.
8 As I mentioned, an administrative law judge is going
9 to get involved in the case later on and will be
10 back up in this area to hold public hearings to get
11 your input on the project at that stage. The judge
12 will also hold what's called evidentiary hearings.
13 It's sort of like a court proceeding. Generally a
14 lot of lawyers in the room for that part of the
15 process. And ultimately the judge will write a
16 report and the Public Utilities Commission will make
17 a decision on whether to issue a route permit or
18 not.

19 And then here's sort of a list version of
20 that same information. And the key word here is
21 estimated. This is an estimated timeline for this
22 project. As you can imagine, a large project, lots
23 of things could come up that could change the
24 schedule. So at this point, again, we're at July
25 2014 at the public information and scoping meetings.

1 At this point we're anticipating a Commission
2 decision in October 2015. Obviously that's very
3 subject to change when we're this far out. So don't
4 mark your calendars and make plans around that at
5 this point.

6 So, as I mentioned, one of the ways that
7 folks can get involved in the process is, of course,
8 by attending meetings like you are today. But you
9 also can submit written comments at various stages
10 in the process. And when the Commission is
11 accepting written comments, we send out a notice
12 saying, hey, we're asking questions about these
13 issues. And so this is an old one, as you can see,
14 from back in April, but I just wanted to bring it up
15 to show you the different points that you'll want to
16 pay attention to when you're looking at one of these
17 notices if you get one in the mail or see one on our
18 website.

19 First off, here we go again with that
20 docket number, very important piece of information.
21 The comment period. We have deadlines for
22 everything that we do so that we can continue the
23 process moving along. Okay, it's not just an
24 open-ended question that's going to hang out there
25 forever and ever. We have some deadlines, and if

1 you want your comments to be considered you have to
2 have them in by the deadline. Sort of like an
3 assignment in school. If you turn it in late, you
4 might not get credit. That's how this works.

5 Then we also will list topics that are
6 open for comment. So this is going to tell you what
7 questions we want answers to right now. And so the
8 notice that you got in the mail or saw in the paper
9 about tonight's meeting had a list of topics open
10 for comment, and those are the things that we care
11 about today. Then you see we cared about different
12 things back in April. And if someone submits
13 comments on those issues today, they're really not
14 helpful because we've already decided on those
15 questions and moved on.

16 Now, if you're looking to stay informed
17 about the project or to dig into information that
18 you might have missed if you're just jumping in now,
19 we do have all the information that's filed in this
20 case on our website through our eDocket system.
21 That's the official record where everything that
22 happens in this case is filed. So you can find
23 things like Minnesota Power's application. If you
24 submit comments in writing today or verbally, those
25 will be on there. Other comments that folks submit

1 will also be included on this website. And so you
2 can follow the steps here. I've included the docket
3 number for the route permit application and also for
4 the certificate of need since they do sort of go
5 hand in hand. I thought if you're interested in one
6 you might be interested in the other.

7 We also maintain a project mailing list
8 where you can receive information about
9 opportunities to participate. So when future
10 meetings are happening or when there's a comment
11 period open, those types of things, you can ask to
12 receive that information either by e-mail or U.S.
13 mail, and you can do that by filling out one of the
14 orange cards from the table when you came in or you
15 can contact our office.

16 We also have an e-mail subscription
17 service. And that would send you an e-mail every
18 time something new comes in. So if you're not a
19 real e-mail fan, this is probably not the option you
20 would want to choose because it can result in a lot
21 of e-mail. And some people will think, oh, my gosh,
22 this is way too much, I just don't want to deal with
23 all of it. But if you like e-mail and you want to
24 make sure you see absolutely everything, this is the
25 way to go.

1 And I always like to give a picture of
2 what that screen looks like when you sign up for the
3 subscription service. Because a lot of people think
4 it's not very user-friendly, I thought it was
5 helpful to see what exactly you need to enter to get
6 that subscription active.

7 And, again, at the PUC there are two
8 different contacts that you might interact with in
9 this project. The first, again, is me, I'm the
10 public advisor, my name is Tracy. And then my
11 counterpart in this process, our energy facilities
12 planner is Michael Kaluzniak and he is here in the
13 back of the room. And we'll be around after the
14 comment period is done this evening, so if you have
15 any questions for us, we'll be happy to answer those
16 for you.

17 And, with that, I will turn it over to
18 Julie Ann Smith with the Department of Energy.

19 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: Hello. Good
20 evening. My name is Julie Ann Smith and I work for
21 the United States Department of Energy. I'm with
22 the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy
23 Reliability.

24 And I want to thank you very much for
25 taking time out of your schedules to be here tonight

1 and to talk to us. Your presence and input are
2 vital to a robust public participation process.

3 This is a scoping meeting, which is about
4 me, or the DOE, listening and learning from you.
5 The Department of Energy needs to hear what issues
6 you think we should consider in conducting our
7 environmental analysis.

8 The reason that we are here is that
9 Minnesota Power is proposing to construct the Great
10 Northern Transmission Line Project, an international
11 transmission line, and they've asked the Department
12 of Energy for a permit to cross the U.S./Canadian
13 border. Minnesota Power submitted a presidential
14 permit application to the DOE in April of 2014.

15 Before any electricity energy
16 transmission facility can be built across the U.S.
17 international border, the project proponent, or
18 applicant, must obtain a presidential permit from
19 the U.S. Department of Energy. A DOE presidential
20 permit authorizes the company to construct, operate,
21 maintain, and connect electric transmission
22 facilities at the border.

23 The DOE is involved in this proceeding
24 for one reason. The proposed transmission line
25 would cross the international border. If this line

1 did not cross the border, the DOE would not be here
2 tonight.

3 The Department of Energy has no authority
4 to site this line. Only the State of Minnesota,
5 specifically the Minnesota Public Utilities
6 Commission, has that authority. The Department of
7 Energy does not convey the right of eminent domain
8 with its presidential permits, nor can DOE address
9 issues of compensation for land that would be
10 impacted by the Great Northern project.

11 However, before the DOE may issue this
12 kind of permit, we must comply with the National
13 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. NEPA is the
14 federal law that serves as the nation's basic
15 charter for environmental protection. It requires
16 that all agencies consider the potential impacts of
17 their proposed actions.

18 NEPA is based on a set of principles, the
19 first and most important being full disclosure and
20 public participation. This enhances understanding
21 on all sides of what the federal government proposes
22 to do, and basically this is why we're here tonight
23 at the scoping meeting.

24 The second principle is that we explore
25 actions -- or alternatives to the action, including

1 a no-action alternative. For the purposes of the
2 DOE, a no-action alternative would mean that we
3 would not issue a presidential permit for the border
4 crossing.

5 In relation to these alternatives we need
6 to assess the potential impact with rigor and on an
7 apples to apples basis. We have to consider
8 mitigation or ways that we can reduce or avoid
9 impacts, and we must weigh options and explain our
10 decisions.

11 At the end of the day, NEPA promotes
12 better informed agency decision-making and provides
13 you the opportunity to learn about the federal
14 agencies' proposed actions and to provide timely
15 information and comments to the agencies about what
16 it is that we're proposing to do.

17 In terms of overall process, NEPA has
18 been referred to as an umbrella statute, in that it
19 at allows agencies and developers to comply with
20 numerous individual, environmental, health and
21 safety-related laws for which we're responsible
22 through the process.

23 We analyze potential effects from federal
24 agency actions to numerous resource types, including
25 biological resources, water resources, as well as

1 those related to human issues such as recreation or
2 environmental justice concerns. And this happens
3 all in one analytical document.

4 For this proposed project, the Department
5 of Energy has determined that the appropriate level
6 of NEPA analysis would be a full analysis in an
7 environmental impact statement, or an EIS. An EIS
8 essentially tells the full story of the proposed
9 project.

10 The Great Northern EIS will analyze the
11 foreseeable environmental impacts that might flow
12 from DOE granting the presidential permit. The EIS
13 will also identify steps that might need to be --
14 might need to be made to mitigate environmental
15 impacts.

16 There are other agencies that are
17 involved in this project and they include the U.S.
18 Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, and the
19 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They have
20 permitting or oversight authority for the proposed
21 facilities within their respective jurisdictions.
22 The Army Corps of Engineers is currently a
23 cooperating agency to the Department of Energy in
24 the preparation of its environmental impact
25 statement and are involved in the preparation of

1 this document.

2 I would also like to note that DOE and
3 the Minnesota Department of Commerce are preparing
4 one analytical document. This is meant to increase
5 efficiencies. And what I mean by that is reducing
6 redundancy in two very similar processes that seek
7 the same type of information and seek to analyze
8 impacts as well as to identify mitigation related to
9 those impacts.

10 So I wanted to stress once again as I go
11 through a very quick synopsis as we move forward
12 from where we are at now, which is scoping, and what
13 you can anticipate from the federal environmental
14 review process.

15 So we're here at scoping and we're here
16 to listen and to get your comments and your
17 suggestions for issues that we should be addressing
18 in the EIS. We would also like to know any
19 alternative routes or alternative route segments for
20 the proposed project.

21 Once our scoping period closes in
22 mid-August, we will get to work on preparing the
23 draft environmental impact statement. This will
24 take several months for us to do. Once the draft is
25 completed, it will be posted on our website, made

1 publicly available, and distributed to everyone on
2 our mailing list. And so, again, I would like to
3 stress, if you would like to be on our mailing list
4 you can sign up at the back using the orange cards
5 and you will receive notifications as well as
6 documents related to the environmental analysis.

7 There will be at least a 45-day comment
8 period for you to review the draft EIS after we've
9 made that public, and you can also submit comments
10 at that time. During the comment period on the
11 draft EIS you'll be able to submit comments in
12 writing or by e-mail. And the DOE will also be
13 coming back here to Minnesota to hold public
14 hearings once again to receive oral comments on the
15 draft EIS directly.

16 After the close of the comment period on
17 the draft document we will prepare the final EIS.
18 Every comment that we receive on the draft
19 environmental impact statement will be included in
20 the final impact statement. And we will respond in
21 the final EIS to every comment that we receive.

22 When the final EIS is completed, that
23 will also be made publicly available, will be posted
24 to our website, and will be sent to everyone that is
25 included on our mailing list.

1 By law, the Department of Energy may not
2 make a final decision on the Great Northern
3 Transmission Line presidential permit until 30 days
4 after publication of the final EIS, represented by
5 the last green box on the little chart here. After
6 that minimum 30-day wait period, the Department
7 would then issue what's called a record of decision.

8 At the completion of this process the DOE
9 may or may not, in its record of decision, issue the
10 presidential permit. If the Department of Energy
11 were to issue the presidential permit, the
12 transmission line and associated facilities could
13 not be built unless and until all other state,
14 local, and federal permits are obtained.

15 For this particular meeting we have a
16 court reporter that's here to write down and record
17 accurately what you say in your comments should you
18 choose to speak. Whether or not you choose to
19 speak, you're invited to send us written comments.
20 You have multiple points of submitting comments,
21 both to myself, and I'll put the information up
22 here, actually, in a more timely way. You can
23 submit those to me as well as to Bill Storm in the
24 Minnesota Department of Commerce.

25 Because we are preparing this document

1 and building this record jointly for both the
2 federal and the state process, if you make a comment
3 to me it will make its way to Bill. If you make it
4 to Bill, it will come to the Department of Energy.

5 You are also -- if you're inclined, you
6 can comment to both of us, the point here being that
7 you only need to comment once and that we will be
8 sharing information fully.

9 Also, and just to close, we will accept
10 comments until mid-August. If you submit comments
11 after that date we will consider those to the extent
12 practicable. And for your information and to help
13 you think about issues as well as to formulate your
14 comments or -- your written comments or tonight's
15 comments, we have representatives from Minnesota
16 Power to answer technical questions, as well as some
17 mapping GIS stations set up in the back that we
18 encourage you to utilize to get a little bit more
19 information and help in looking at your particular
20 property or resource issues of concern.

21 I just want to note the information for
22 contacting me. You can do that a variety of ways,
23 as well as, like I said, you can contact Bill Storm
24 at Minnesota Department of Commerce when it comes to
25 the preparation of this EIS.

And now I'm going to turn this over to Dave Moeller from Minnesota Power to give a little background on how this project has been developed.

My name is David Moeller, I'm an attorney
for Minnesota Power in Duluth, Minnesota.

Usually, when we're up north, last week I was introducing who Minnesota Power is, but folks here in Grand Rapids and in the Grand Rapids area know us well since we serve this area and we have plants in this area, so I'll skip that part.

And as Julie said, we have people in the

1 back who can do maps, alternatives, other things
2 that you need going through that and they'll be
3 available after the hearing is complete.

4 For Minnesota Power this project is an
5 important project, the Great Northern Transmission
6 Line, and as the first slide says, we see it as
7 transforming our nation's energy sector.

8 And it is part of a larger plan for
9 Minnesota Power. We file a resource plan with the
10 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission every couple
11 years, and this was an important component of our
12 resource plan that we filed and was approved last
13 year. And what it does is it provides additional
14 benefits through diversity of our generation
15 resources, through adding additional resources that
16 we can use for our customers. And these resources,
17 especially the hydro energy that we obtain from
18 Manitoba Hydro, comes with less carbon emissions --
19 or no carbon emissions, less emissions overall, as
20 well as the flexibility and diversity to provide
21 needed energy and capacity for our customers.

22 We see the main benefits as kind of
23 threefold, as the slide indicates. The first is
24 diversity. Providing access to clean, affordable,
25 and reliable energy not only for Minnesota Power's

1 customers, but for the region as a whole, since the
2 line will transfer more energy that Minnesota Power
3 needs but would also provide benefits to other
4 utilities and other customers in the Upper Midwest.

5 As part of this and as part of the need
6 provisions that we have within our power purchase
7 agreements with Manitoba Hydro, it allows for us to
8 enhance even our wind capacity, our wind energy that
9 we have out of North Dakota, through provisions that
10 allow effectively for storage of that wind when we
11 don't need it up in the Manitoba Hydro system and
12 then they can send it back to us when necessary or
13 when we need it.

14 The line will also help for increased
15 demand that we see here on the Iron Range,
16 especially with new mines and new paper mills and
17 other additions to growing loads that Minnesota
18 Power has on the Iron Range.

19 And then, thirdly, liability. You know,
20 a 500 kV line will strengthen our system reliability
21 for Minnesota Power and the region, providing
22 another interconnection between Manitoba and
23 Minnesota that benefits the region as a whole.

24 In addition to kind of the overall need
25 benefit, we also see a benefit for the region

1 through what we'll be paying for property taxes. In
2 the four counties -- in the four or five counties,
3 depending on where the line is routed, we would
4 estimate that we'll probably pay annually about \$17
5 to \$19 million in property taxes that would go back
6 to counties, school districts, and cities, if there
7 are cities that the line goes through, so we see
8 those benefits as well.

9 As we developed the project, you know, we
10 had to look at different ways to get the project
11 permitted, the project routed, figure out what the
12 reasonable and feasible alternatives are. And so we
13 went through a permitting and siting strategy as
14 laid out here in this slide. Charting what the
15 critical path is, revealing what the fatal flaws
16 are, you know, where can't you go. Define what the
17 study area is so that we have a scope of how we're
18 going to get from Manitoba down to Minnesota Power's
19 service territory. Engaging stakeholders multiple
20 times. We've been here in Grand Rapids multiple
21 times, as I'll show in a few slides, as well as
22 throughout where the study area is. Talking to
23 landowners, talking to agency folks, talking to
24 local planning officials about where the best place
25 to route a transmission line is and more places

1 where we should be routing transmission lines are.
2 Determining what those range of alternatives are,
3 and then finally, as Tracy had mentioned, filing for
4 permits in April of 2014.

5 This slide shows some of the criteria
6 that we used as we were evaluating those range of
7 alternatives. And I apologize for the small print,
8 the handout has it in more detail. But as you can
9 see, there's two main categories, opportunities and
10 constraints. Opportunities are very small, there's
11 a short list of those, but they are where there's
12 existing transmission lines where it's feasible to
13 parallel those, other corridors or other
14 rights-of-way, in adherence with state policy to not
15 proliferate where possible the transmission line.

16 There are also many constraints in places
17 where either you can't go under state law or it's
18 better not to go there because of different
19 attributes or different characteristics of the land
20 or of the land ownership or where humans are.

21 So as we started the stakeholder
22 outreach, we went through locations throughout the
23 study area. And these next slides show where we
24 started with the outreach, as well as the different
25 open houses and workshops that we held over the last

1 two years. And Grand Rapids was a consistent one
2 throughout this whole process.

3 Ultimately, after all this process, after
4 taking in lots of consideration, we came up with a
5 preferred and an alternative route that we presented
6 in our applications that were filed in April of
7 2014. The blue route is our preferred route and the
8 orange route is an alternative route that we also
9 believe is feasible for the Commission to consider.
10 We'd be happy to talk more in detail about that
11 criteria afterwards in the question-and-answer
12 session.

13 As we developed these routes, we narrowed
14 down where the project would be. We started out
15 with a study area a little over 19,000 squares
16 miles, narrowed it down to corridors, route options,
17 and route alternatives. And now we have two route
18 alternatives that are both 220 miles long. And then
19 ultimately, when the project is built, we'll have
20 right-of-way of 200 feet for the transmission line,
21 which will equal about eight square miles of direct
22 impact.

23 This slide is a summary of just the
24 different workshops and open houses and the comments
25 that we received throughout those different

1 processes, including online comments that we
2 received from various people and agencies.

3 And then, as Tracy mentioned, we were
4 here in February for a scoping hearing on the
5 certificate of need, in Grand Rapids and throughout
6 other locations in northern Minnesota.

7 And this slide just shows the major
8 permits that we'll have to obtain before we can
9 start construction on the transmission line. We
10 will also have to obtain other crossing permits or
11 other permits as we go through, but the major
12 permits, starting with the certificate of need, as
13 Tracy described, is from the Minnesota Public
14 Utilities Commission. And we're in the middle of
15 that process and we expect a decision from the
16 Commission next spring, probably May of 2015 is the
17 current time frame for that. So we'll have other
18 public hearings on that probably in the October time
19 frame here in Grand Rapids and other places. But
20 that's just getting going as far as the PUC process.

21 And the state route permit and the
22 federal presidential permit are what we're here for
23 tonight, or the start of the process for those two
24 permits. And then we'll also have to obtain a
25 section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act from

1 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because of impacts
2 on wetlands.

3 And then, finally, the last major permit
4 is the crossing of state lands, which will be issued
5 by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
6 And it's a license to cross state lands that we have
7 to obtain as a lot of the project goes through state
8 lands.

9 As both Tracy and Julie said, we
10 appreciate you coming tonight. And besides the
11 other websites, Minnesota Power has developed a
12 project website, greatnortherntransmissionline.com,
13 which has a lot of information, has maps, has the
14 notices and our various applications that we've
15 filed available. And also, if you have questions,
16 you can contact us through that, or we're here, of
17 course, tonight as well.

18 So once again, thank you and I appreciate
19 it.

20 Bill is up next.

21 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Dave. Good
22 evening folks. As with everybody, thanks for coming
23 out, the process wouldn't work without you.

24 As you might have heard when you came in,
25 my name is Bill Storm, I work for the Department of

1 Commerce.

2 In these large energy projects that come
3 before the Commission, while the Commission is the
4 final decision-maker and they will be -- in a little
5 over a year from now they'll be making a decision on
6 this docket. And their decision will basically be
7 three things. Is the environmental impact statement
8 adequate. And that means does the environmental
9 impact statement adequately address the issues that
10 were in the scoping decision. And what we're here
11 to do tonight is to flesh out and help you help me
12 develop that scoping decision.

13 The other decision that the PUC will be
14 making is, should they grant a route permit to
15 Minnesota Power, if they should, where should the
16 line go and what conditions should be attached to
17 that permit. So that's, as Tracy said, that's the
18 PUC role in this.

19 The Department of Commerce's role in this
20 is we do the environmental review. And that
21 includes that we solicit public input, we make a
22 scoping recommendation to our commissioner, the
23 commissioner of the Department of Commerce. The
24 scoping decision, which basically outlines in a
25 table of contents format what issues and concerns

1 and alternatives should be studied in the
2 environmental impact statement. We facilitate the
3 development of that scope and then we also write the
4 environmental document. So that's my role and the
5 Department's role in this.

6 And as Julie mentioned, this case is a
7 little different because there's a presidential
8 permit that's required that requires Julie's group
9 to do an EIS, the state process requires my group
10 doing an EIS, so we're going to do a joint EIS.

11 This is basically just a schematic of the
12 schedule. Both Tracy, Julie, and Mike, or Dave,
13 sorry, Dave, Dave has gone over the schedule and
14 this is basically another graphic of that schedule.
15 You can see we're at the public meeting, I'm here to
16 solicit comments.

17 In Minnesota, energy projects such as
18 this transmission line that come before the
19 Commission for a final determination, they have two
20 processes that they can go under that reviews that
21 application. They have a full process and an
22 alternative process. The alternative process is a
23 shorter process, six months, it's for the smaller
24 projects. The full process is a year, 12 months,
25 plus three months process. It's made for the longer

1 projects, the higher voltage projects. This project
2 does not qualify for the alternative review so they
3 must go through the full review process.

4 Now, the full review process and the
5 alternative review process have similar milestones.
6 And an example is they both have public scoping
7 meetings and comment periods. And that's what I'm
8 doing here tonight. I'm out here soliciting
9 comments from local units of government and from
10 citizens. They both have a scoping decision.

11 As I said, the Department, the
12 commissioner of the Department of Commerce has the
13 responsibility to determine what the scope of the
14 environmental document should be. And that is
15 called a scoping decision.

16 Both the alternative process and the full
17 process have an environmental review document that
18 is produced. In the alternative process that
19 document is called an environmental assessment, it's
20 only released as one document, a final document,
21 there is no draft. In the full process that
22 environmental document is called an environmental
23 impact statement. And the environmental impact
24 statement and the environmental assessment cover the
25 same issues, they're very similar. What is

1 different is how they are processed.

2 In the full process the environmental
3 impact statement is first released as a draft. And
4 we will, once the scoping decision is set by my
5 commissioner, the DOC and the DOE will begin working
6 on the EIS. We will produce the EIS in a draft
7 form, we will release it to the public, and then we
8 will come back out for another road show where we
9 will have meetings like this, where the public can
10 speak to the draft environmental impact statement.
11 You can point out where you think I failed or you
12 can want me to flesh out more information and add
13 more information to it. But we will have that road
14 show with seeking your comments on the draft EIS.

15 Following the road show there will be a
16 comment period. All those comments will be utilized
17 to write the final environmental impact statement.

18 The final environmental impact statement
19 is basically the draft environmental impact
20 statement with another volume associated with it or
21 attached to it that lists every comment we got and
22 then lists all our responses. And those responses
23 may be as simple as an acknowledgement of thank you
24 for your comment, or they may be in response to a
25 comment, information we got from the public that's

1 good information. After considering that
2 information we revise a section in the draft EIS.
3 It will point you back to that section and in there
4 you will find the original text striked out and the
5 new text bolded or underlined so you can see the
6 difference where the change was made.

7 While we're working on the final EIS,
8 running concurrently will be public hearings. And
9 as Tracy said, we'll be back up here for another
10 road show, and this time we will be with an ALJ, an
11 administrative law judge, and she will preside over
12 a public hearing. And the public hearing is an
13 opportunity again for the public to voice their
14 comments about the project, how they feel about the
15 project, what things they're interested in that the
16 project may impact, and they can suggest to the ALJ
17 conditions they they'd like to see attached to the
18 permit. So that's basically the full process.

19 Scoping the environmental document. The
20 purpose of the scoping meeting is to provide the
21 public an opportunity to give me feedback on what
22 you would like to see in the environmental document.
23 I'm seeking local information on -- you may know the
24 route pretty good from your hiking, mountain biking,
25 hunting activities in there. And you may know that

1 there's a feature, a geographic feature, an
2 ecological feature, or a built environment feature,
3 archaeological or something, that is in that route
4 that you want to make sure comes to my attention.
5 You want to make sure that I look at what is the
6 potential impact of building this transmission line
7 on that feature that I have identified, and what are
8 the possible ways that that impact can be lessened.

9 So that's one of the things I'm seeking.
10 The way we get there is by taking this information
11 from the public. And you may, when you submit that
12 comment, that statement, that concern to me, another
13 thing you may want to do is put an alternative on
14 the table. You may say, okay, Bill, I have an old
15 cedar stand that the deer use for the wintering on
16 this property. Maybe it's not my property, but I
17 know from my activities in the area that it's in the
18 route. And you read the application and you
19 consider it and you think I don't see how they can
20 build that without damaging that cedar stand so I
21 think they should try to go around it. So I'm
22 proposing, Bill, that we put an alternative on the
23 table that goes around that. And I'll go into a
24 little bit more detail about that. So I'm seeking
25 issues, concerns, comments, and I'm also seeking

1 alternatives to be studied in the environmental
2 document.

3 When the environmental scoping decision
4 is released by my commissioner, it must have three
5 things in it, minimum. It's got to identify all the
6 routes, and that's the blue, the orange route, and
7 any of the routes that the public has put on the
8 table that the commissioner has felt warrant further
9 consideration, has made it into the scope.

10 It must also discuss any specific
11 impacts, all the specific impacts that are going to
12 be addressed, and how those impacts will be
13 mitigated, and then it must also give a date of
14 completion for the draft EIS.

15 The EIS, Julie gave a definition of it.
16 My definition of the EIS is it's a written document
17 that describes the human and environmental impacts
18 of a transmission line project and any select
19 alternatives that made it through scope, and methods
20 to mitigate that impact.

21 So, as I said, what I'm here to do
22 tonight is I want to gather your input. And as I
23 said, two areas. I want to gather your input on
24 issues, concerns, features that you may think will
25 be impacted by this transmission line that you want

1 to make sure I cover in my draft -- in my scoping
2 decision. And two, alternative routes. Let's cover
3 the first one first.

4 When you look at this document that I
5 have on the table, it's a draft scoping document,
6 and you turn to page 6 -- bottom of 5, the whole
7 thing of 6 -- you can see what looks like a table of
8 contents. And when I talk about scope, here's what
9 I'm talking about, what's going to be contained in
10 the environmental report. And you can see when you
11 look at -- when you get down to section 5, potential
12 impacts, and then there are categories.
13 Displacement, TV interference, aesthetics, these are
14 very broad categories. And what I'm asking you to
15 do is with your local knowledge give me specifics
16 that fall within those categories.

17 An example is, you may, from your
18 activities out in this area, recreation activities,
19 business activities, you may be aware that within
20 the route lies a Lapland buttercup, a species of
21 plant that you're concerned about, or it could be
22 that deer wintering stand and the cedars. But you
23 want to make sure that, Bill, I see that you're
24 going to cover natural environment, I see you're
25 going to cover flora. That's kind of broad, I want

1 to make sure you're covering the Lapland buttercup
2 or the cedar stand at this location that I know the
3 deer are wintering in.

4 So that's what I'm asking you to do.
5 Help me flesh out this document with the details.
6 That's sort of the easy one. What are your
7 concerns, what are the features that you're aware of
8 that you're afraid may be impacted.

9 The tougher thing for the public to think
10 about in the scope of what I'm doing here is I'm
11 asking for alternatives. You may -- as I said, you
12 may be aware of a feature, let's use a cedar stand
13 with the deer in winter, and you've looked at it,
14 you've looked at how big that stand is, and in your
15 assessment, I don't think you can build a
16 transmission line through there without adversely
17 impacting that stand, no matter what best management
18 practices you use during construction or how you
19 design it. So I think the best solution is use an
20 alternative. Come up with an alternative that goes
21 around that issue.

22 And that's what I'm asking you to do
23 tonight, and I'll run through some examples so you
24 can see what I'm getting at when I'm asking for
25 alternatives.

1 And the bar is set kind of high on this.
2 What the rules say is if you want to put an
3 alternative on the table, alternative route segment
4 or alternative route that you want me to consider,
5 you need to explain in your comment to me why this
6 route alternative should be considered, what are you
7 mitigating.

8 And as an example, if you -- if the
9 transmission line crosses your property and you just
10 don't want to look at it, you don't like it there
11 and you want to push it to Joe's property, you're
12 not mitigating that impact, you're just moving that
13 impact. So the bar is set kind of high that we need
14 to see what unique feature are you trying to
15 mitigate.

16 And then in addition to that, you must
17 supply all supporting information. Maps, a
18 narrative on why, any information that you can pull
19 up from other regional or local government sources.
20 To aid you in this, because this bar is a little
21 high, we have set up two GIS stations in the back.
22 And with these GIS stations you can see my man G and
23 his sidekick, Carol, who can sit down with you and
24 help pull up the maps, aerial photos. You can see
25 your property or feature you're looking at, you can

1 overlay the route and the anticipated alignment on
2 top of that and you can work with those folks to try
3 to come up with an alternative. Maybe we just move
4 it this way or maybe we just move it that way. And
5 I'll run through some examples to show you what I'm
6 talking about.

7 This is a transmission line project from
8 a utility who wanted to build a transmission line
9 from Tower to Embarrass, Minnesota. It was a 115 kV
10 line, they wanted to build the transmission line
11 along the east side of this road, this road is 135,
12 I believe. They want to run the transmission line
13 along that side.

14 So they came into the process, made an
15 application -- this was the alternative process.
16 They submitted the application. I came out to do
17 scoping meetings, and when I did there was a series
18 of landowners who had local knowledge that the land
19 behind them was all tax-forfeited land. It was not
20 private land. And they had their homes along the
21 east side of this road and they did not want the
22 transmission line running between their homes and
23 the road across their driveways. Their homes are
24 set back various distances, I guess it depends on
25 your tolerance of plowing snow in this area, but

1 they didn't want that crossing their driveways
2 between their homes and their roads.

3 And with this local knowledge that there
4 was this public forfeited land back here, they came
5 to me and said, Bill, it makes sense to me that the
6 Commission would want to use public property as
7 opposed to private property if the public lands are
8 readily available to build a transmission line on.

9 That made sense to me, so I recommended
10 to my commissioner, yeah, we should include this in
11 the scope. My commissioner agreed, it was included
12 into the scope, scoping decision, therefore it was
13 evaluated in the environmental document. It was
14 then carried forth to the public hearing and then it
15 was laid out in front of the Commission.

16 At the end, the whole record was laid out
17 in front of the Commission. Not only the
18 environmental review document, but all the comments
19 at the public hearings, the testimony, all the
20 information. At the final hearing where the Public
21 Utilities Commission is making their final decision,
22 they agreed. And they issued a permit, but they
23 required the applicant to push the transmission line
24 past the private property and run it down the public
25 property for that stretch.

1 Another example. This is down in Chaska,
2 down in the Cities. A utility wanted to rebuild a
3 transmission line. There was an existing
4 transmission line, this purple line here, that ran
5 along the road, it was a 69 kV line. The utility
6 wanted to upgrade that to a 115. That means taller
7 poles, a little wider right-of-way, more capacity on
8 the line. There was a group of citizens in that
9 area when I did my scoping meeting with local
10 knowledge. They were aware that there's a historic
11 building here. And they were worried that
12 increasing that transmission line from 69 kV to 115
13 kV, with the taller poles and a little bit wider
14 right-of-way, they thought that would adversely
15 affect the historic nature of this property, this
16 historic property.

17 So they came to me and said, Bill, we
18 want to give you two options for you to look at,
19 that we want you to evaluate. The first option is a
20 route alternative segment. And as you can see, the
21 purple line here is where the existing line is, the
22 faint line around it, that's the route width. The
23 utilities come in with their anticipated alignment
24 and their route width. The citizens said, well,
25 Bill, let's give you an alternative route segment

1 that comes out of the route that they're requesting,
2 tap into this old abandoned railroad line, and then
3 runs along that and then rejoins the proposed
4 project.

5 In addition, they said, well, we not only
6 want you to look at that, Bill, we want you to look
7 at a modification to the anticipated alignment. As
8 I said, the anticipated alignment follows the
9 current 69 kV alignment. They said, well, why don't
10 we just push it across the road and why don't you
11 evaluate that in your document.

12 That made sense to me. I put my
13 recommendation to my commissioner, explained why I
14 think that made sense to me. He concurred, he
15 released a scoping decision that included those two
16 options. Since they were in the scoping decision,
17 they were carried forth into the environmental
18 document and evaluated, they were carried forth then
19 into the public hearing, and then they were carried
20 into the final decision meeting with the PUC.

21 And when the PUC looked at the whole
22 record -- not just the environmental review, but all
23 the testimony and all the information that came in
24 at the public hearing -- they did not think that the
25 impact going from a 69 kV to a 115 kV line would

1 negatively impact that historic property. So when
2 they issued their permit, they issued a permit for
3 exactly what the utility was requesting, which was
4 to rebuild along the existing alignment.

5 Next example. This example is near
6 Floodwood, I believe. And there was a utility that
7 wanted to build a 115 transmission line. As you can
8 see it's coming up the east side of this road,
9 turning and following the south side of this road
10 here. And this is just a small section, it actually
11 went out quite a ways. There was -- I had scoping
12 meetings just like I'm having now, came out.

13 And some landowners who lived on the
14 south side of that road whose homes were just off
15 the road, again as far as you're willing to plow, I
16 guess, and they had local knowledge and they knew
17 that the land on the north side of this road was all
18 corporate Blandin type land, no one was living on
19 it. And they said, Bill, it makes sense to us that
20 the Commission would want to build a new
21 right-of-way on the private -- I mean, the corporate
22 property rather than going across private property
23 between people's homes and the road.

24 Again, that made sense to me. Again, I
25 recommended to my commissioner that we incorporate

1 that route alternative in the scoping decision, he
2 concurred, it did get into the scoping decision.
3 Because it was in the scoping decision it went
4 through to the environmental review document, was
5 evaluated in that document. Then went on to the
6 public hearing and then went to the final decision
7 in front of the PUC.

8 When the PUC had the whole record,
9 including the environmental review and any testimony
10 that came up, they looked at that and they agreed.
11 They thought, yeah, that makes sense. And when they
12 permitted this line they required that the utility
13 run along the north side of that road.

14 Another example. This is also, I think,
15 from the Floodwood area. This is another rebuild
16 situation. The utility wanted to rebuild an
17 existing 69 kV line that ran up the east side of
18 this road here. They wanted to go from a 69 to a
19 115. Again, taller poles, a little wider
20 right-of-way, a little bit more capacity in the
21 line.

22 As I did my scoping meetings and came out
23 and met the public, there was a family who had a
24 memorial placed that was just outside the
25 right-of-way of the 69 line. And they were worried

1 that the new, bigger poles, a little bit wider
2 right-of-way of the 115 line, that that would
3 negatively impact their memorial.

4 That made sense to me, I thought that was
5 worth evaluating, let's lay out the facts on that
6 and see what the potentials are. And I recommended
7 to my commissioner that an alternative route of
8 pushing it to the east side of the road be
9 considered. He concurred, that alternative made it
10 to scoping. Since it made it to scoping it was
11 evaluated in the environmental document. From there
12 it went to the public hearing and from there it went
13 to the final decision before the Commission.

14 And, again, the Commission looked at the
15 whole record, the EA, the testimony that was put
16 into the public hearing. And when they looked at
17 the facts, and included in the facts were
18 renderings, photographic renderings of what it would
19 look like with the new transmission line, all the
20 measurements of the distances that things were away
21 from each other. They felt that the new
22 transmission line along the west side of the road
23 would not negatively impact that memorial. So when
24 they issued their permit, they issued it the way the
25 utility requested it, which was to run the

1 transmission line up the west side of that road.

2 Another example. This is in the
3 Chaska -- not Chaska, the Glencoe/Waconia area, I
4 believe. The utility wanted to rebuild an existing
5 69 kV line and they wanted to rebuild it to a 115 kV
6 line. Again, a little bit wider right-of-way,
7 taller poles, a little bit more capacity. Well, the
8 69 kV line was put in some time ago. And since that
9 time the county had come in and readjusted the
10 County Road 34. Originally County Road 34 ran down,
11 and both the county road and the 69 kV line followed
12 that line right there.

13 Through my scoping processes, I met with
14 the public. The local landowners who lived along
15 here said, you know, Bill, since they realigned that
16 34 and now they got to reconstruct this 69 line and
17 rebuild a 115, why don't you evaluate the impact of
18 realigning that new 115 line with the county road
19 again.

20 Again, that made sense to me. I
21 recommended that to the scope of my commissioner.
22 It made it into the scoping decision and therefore
23 was evaluated in the environmental review document.
24 It went through the public hearing and then was
25 placed in front of the Commission for the final

1 meeting along with the rest of the record.

2 And the Commission did concur and they
3 did issue a route permit that required the new 115
4 transmission line to follow along the road
5 right-of-way of the realigned County Road 34.

6 So those are the kind of things I'm
7 looking for when I talk about alternatives and
8 how -- you can get an idea of the sense of how I
9 weigh alternatives and what I'm looking for. And,
10 like I said, Mr. G in the back and Carol, we have
11 two GIS stations set back there, they can help you a
12 lot with considering these ideas, maybe coming up
13 with a route alternative.

14 And, of course, you can contact me as we
15 move through the process before the close of the
16 comment period if you need help putting your
17 thoughts together or how do I put a route on the
18 table.

19 This slide here is just basically a
20 statement that I don't work in isolation. And
21 particularly in this case I'm not working in
22 isolation because I am partnered with the DOE to
23 write the environmental impact statement. But
24 statute requires the downstream permitting agencies,
25 if they get a permit to build this transmission line

1 from the PUC, that's not the only permit they need.
2 As Dave pointed out, there are other permits down
3 the road. If they're crossing a public road or a
4 MnDOT road, they need a MnDOT crossing permit. If
5 they're crossing DNR land or public waters they need
6 a permit, a license from the DNR to do that. They
7 may need a soil erosion control plan from the PCA.
8 So there are other downstream permits, permit
9 agencies that get involved. And by law, and they
10 do, they participate in the process. They come to
11 me, we share information, they express their
12 concerns to me as we move through the scoping
13 process into the scoping decision. And then again
14 as we move through the environmental review and into
15 the hearing, they will also make comments in the
16 hearing. So this is a graphic that shows you I work
17 with these other agencies. Downstream permits, Dave
18 pretty much covered that.

19 Information. In this particular case
20 there's a lot of places to get information from.
21 The PUC has the eDockets, and Tracy went through
22 that. EDockets to me is sort of the professional
23 site that has the official record in it. The
24 applicant, they maintain a website that has, from
25 their point of view, the information that's

1 important. The DOE has a website that has
2 information on it. The Department of Commerce, we
3 also have a website with information on it. And
4 what I do for this website is any documents that I
5 generate, the draft scoping document that you saw on
6 the table, your public comments that I get back, the
7 scoping decision, the environmental impact
8 statement, all the things that I generate, I PDF
9 them and I put them on our website where you can
10 download them, print them, review them, and do that
11 sort of thing with them.

12 Now, like I said, me and Julie from the
13 DOE, we're seeking your input. Your local
14 knowledge, your input, what are your issues, what
15 are your concerns. We also want to answer any
16 questions you may have, if we can. The comment
17 period for the scope of this EIS ends of August 15.
18 So you need to have your comments to me by
19 August 15.

20 You can send your comments to me via
21 snail mail, e-mail, fax, or you can go to our
22 website and make a comment there. You can certainly
23 send a comment to Julie or go to the federal website
24 and make a comment there. You can comment both
25 places, you can send comments to both I and Julie,

1 but you don't have to. If you send it to one of us,
2 we are pooling our comments, we are working on this
3 together, your comment will not fall through the
4 cracks. But I just want to remind you that the
5 deadline is August 15th for making comments.

6 So that's basically what the
7 environmental review process is. And as you came in
8 the door I did mention that the way I usually handle
9 these things, because sometimes I have 400 people in
10 the room, sometimes I have three, it just depends on
11 the project, the time of day, what's happening. I
12 always use cards to fill out. When I go through the
13 cards, once I'm done with them, then I'll do a show
14 of hands. And if you want to come back and say
15 something again, we'll certainly give you the
16 opportunity to do that. So what I'm going to do is
17 I'm going to start with the cards and then I'll go
18 to show of hands.

19 What I would like you to do, because the
20 acoustics in here are kind of funky and my court
21 reporter is right here, when I call your name, if
22 you wouldn't mind please stepping to the podium,
23 state and spell your name, and speak slower than I
24 do so the court reporter has a prayer of catching
25 what you're saying. And try to sort of face her so

1 she can see your face, it helps her in her writing.

2 Before I do that, I just want to
3 identify, we talked about Mike Kaluzniak, who is an
4 analyst with the PUC. We also have Jamie Schrenzel
5 here from the DNR, and one of your questions may --
6 when you ask -- if you come up and make comments, if
7 you have a question I will then try to direct that
8 question to either Tracy, MP, maybe Jamie Schrenzel
9 if it's a DNR question, or the DOE if it's a DOE
10 question.

11 So when I call your name, please step
12 forward to the podium, state and spell your name,
13 speak slowly, blah, blah, blah.

14 Okay. Tammy Card.

15 MS. TAMMY CARD: Thank you. Like you
16 said, my name is Tammy Card, T-A-M-M-Y, Card,
17 C-A-R-D. And I'd just like to thank you for this
18 opportunity to voice our concerns.

19 I'm a wife and a mother of four healthy
20 children. I am concerned, the orange route that
21 goes through Balsam Township goes right through our
22 community, the corridor goes right over our home.
23 For the health of our community and for my family,
24 please choose the blue route through this area. It
25 affects less homes and does not go right through our

1 small community.

2 Our community has two clinics, a
3 convenience store, a cafe, a fire department, a
4 church, and a beautiful park that my children and
5 many families enjoy. My husband is also on the fire
6 department. They use the ball field in the park for
7 the medical helicopter to land. If the orange route
8 did go through that, they would not be able to use
9 that for emergencies.

10 So please choose the blue route through
11 our community and please don't destroy what we have.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Tammy.

14 Warren McQuay. Please step to the podium
15 and state and spell your name.

16 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Warren McQuay,
17 W-A-R-R-E-N, M-C-Q-U-A-Y.

18 I just have a couple things, and I think
19 my issue is a little different. I live in an area
20 where the lake is on one side and I own two homes
21 and I have a beautiful old grove cedar forest and
22 it's right in where the line will probably, in my
23 opinion, go because I'm surrounded by county
24 forfeited land. And there's a river on one side and
25 my property and the lake on the other.

1 I think -- I'm not very good at saying an
2 alternative route because I can't see myself up here
3 saying put it over on my neighbor's house, that's
4 better than my house, you know. I just can't do
5 that. But I think my problem with it all is, as the
6 Cities grow, as the southern part of the state
7 grows, this area up here is going to be dissected
8 and cut in every direction by pipelines and power
9 lines.

10 And I don't see -- all I can -- right now
11 with two houses for sale, I'm already feeling the
12 financial impact of this power line because no one
13 is going to buy a house to look at a power line. So
14 I have to sit here and wait to see if it goes to the
15 blue and doesn't go to the orange. I'm sure the --
16 and I believe the blue people are saying I hope it
17 goes to the orange and the orange are saying I hope
18 it goes to the blue, so we're all here hoping the
19 other one gets out-hoped. And I just have a real
20 hard time with that and I have a hard time with the
21 fact that we just keep giving. And I don't see,
22 when you dissect -- when you take away your
23 resources, like I say, my old grove, and I can't say
24 my old grove trees are worth any more than the
25 neighbor's house or my house or anything like that.

1 But I think the real answer that would
2 make me happy is everybody would realize that these
3 things are needed, but you just can't have them
4 thrown out and hope something sticks to the wall and
5 we'll run one there and I think we'll run one there.
6 And pretty soon, pretty soon, as I always kind of
7 picture the Red River Valley once was a beautiful
8 prairie and right now it's a sterilized cropland
9 with nothing. I mean, actually nothing.

10 And, of course, they're using their
11 resources to the best possible advantage
12 financially, but it is missing something. And I
13 think as we dissect the northern part of the state
14 from the southern part of the state or wherever, we
15 have to realize that there's something important
16 about our resources besides all financial gain.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. BILL STORM: Warren, can I ask you a
19 question?

20 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Sure.

21 MR. BILL STORM: You said that there's
22 tax-forfeited land, is that tax-forfeited directly
23 adjacent to your property?

24 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Right, on both sides.
25 And I got a river on the other side of my property

1 and a lake on the other. And then I got Blandin on
2 the other side of the tax forfeit. And the way I
3 see this is if I was the man that was making the
4 decision of where to run this power line, I would
5 run it over my place because there's a lot less
6 houses and a lot less people affected coming through
7 my area. I'm saying that's the --

8 MR. BILL STORM: You mean comparing the
9 orange route to the blue route?

10 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Right. In my -- as I
11 look at the maps and dissect the maps, I believe I'm
12 on the losing side. And I'm not trying to out-hope
13 the blue side or whatever. I'm just saying if I had
14 to make the decision on just the number of people
15 being affected, and I think a lot of this has to do
16 with the '70s, remember the power line coming
17 through Minnesota?

18 MR. BILL STORM: Oh, yeah.

19 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Well, I was pretty
20 involved as a -- where I worked in my job I had to
21 deal with that. And I think all this process, of
22 course, is to avert that. And it's -- in some cases
23 it's good, but I'm not so sure in all cases that it
24 will work, you see. I'm just saying that to
25 out-hope another side is really difficult for me.

1 MR. BILL STORM: Have you worked with G
2 at all on looking at your property?

3 MR. WARREN McQUAY: No, I was going to,
4 but then you got started.

5 MR. BILL STORM: What I'd encourage you
6 to do is sit down with G or Carol and have them call
7 up your property, have them call up the route width
8 and the anticipated alignment, and think about is
9 there any way that they can modify that alignment or
10 move the route.

11 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Well, see, the bad
12 part is the direction the power line is going is the
13 direction the river is going, okay. And so either
14 you put it -- and I only have 40 acres, so the 40
15 acres goes to the river and to the lake. So you
16 either go -- in my case, you go through the cedars
17 or you go over the house, you see. It's just real
18 simple. You have to go one way or the other.
19 Obviously they're not going to run the power line
20 over the lake, they're not going to run the power
21 line down the river, you see, and when you take away
22 all that, then you're out of the corridor.

23 MR. BILL STORM: Well, you can certainly
24 ask for an alternative corridor. You can say --

25 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Well, certainly, you

1 can ask, but sometimes there just isn't a good one.

2 MR. BILL STORM: That's so true,
3 sometimes there isn't.

4 MR. WARREN McQUAY: So somebody in here
5 is going to lose. I mean, somebody is going to
6 lose. Not everybody is going to walk out of here a
7 winner in October of 2015.

8 MR. BILL STORM: I agree that, this
9 process, somebody is going to carry the burden for
10 society of having this transmission line. What I
11 want to do is try to minimize that as much as
12 possible. And that may be, let's look at it to see
13 if there's an alternative route, and if there is an
14 alternative route, just in case the orange line
15 would get selected, what is the best alignment that
16 would be possible through that. What alignment
17 through that 3,000-foot-wide orange route, what
18 200-foot-wide alignment -- pushing it east, pushing
19 it west -- would be the best for your situation.

20 MR. WARREN McQUAY: I realize that, but
21 if I was a selecting official I would try to make
22 this as most palatable as I could. And by doing
23 that, I would try to appease the largest number of
24 people. And in most cases that's the way this will
25 work.

1 MR. BILL STORM: You remember the factors
2 that Tracy talked about. There are many factors.
3 Human settlement is one of them, there are -- how
4 those factors are weighed is not always homes win.
5 I mean, if homes versus some endemic species that
6 the DNR may be concerned about, the homes might not
7 necessarily win in that case. Or some natural
8 feature, the Commission may say, well, in this case
9 we think these five or six homeowners carrying the
10 burden is better than us losing a deer wintering
11 stand, or us losing whatever the alternative feature
12 is that may get impacted.

13 MR. WARREN McQUAY: I believe the last
14 meeting I was at I was talking to someone here, a
15 representative, and I mentioned the cedar swamps.
16 And immediately a woman turned around, you'd rather
17 save the cedar swamp than my house? You know, no, I
18 don't want to lose your house either, you know,
19 and --

20 MR. BILL STORM: Well, nobody is going to
21 lose a home over this.

22 MR. WARREN McQUAY: But the way I see it,
23 though, is you've lost a lot if a power line goes
24 over your house. And I think I've never heard of
25 anyone in the Twin Cities say, hey, let's buy a

1 house up north where we can see the power line, you
2 know, they just don't do that.

3 MR. BILL STORM: I understand what you're
4 saying.

5 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Do you understand
6 what I'm saying?

7 MR. BILL STORM: All I can do at this
8 point is encourage you to work with G and --

9 MR. WARREN McQUAY: I will.

10 MR. BILL STORM: And see what can be --
11 what can minimize the burden. If you are the one
12 who carries the burden, let's see how we can
13 minimize it. But sit down with G and see if maybe
14 the burden can be avoided if there's tax-forfeited
15 land or something near you.

16 MR. WARREN McQUAY: Okay. Thank you.

17 MR. BILL STORM: I do appreciate it,
18 Warren.

19 Robert Ward. Please step to the podium
20 and state and spell your name.

21 MR. ROBERT WARD: My name is Robert Ward,
22 and the Robert is Robert, and the last name is
23 W-A-R-D.

24 One of the questions I had is, I'm
25 assuming, and I may be wrong here, has the

1 certificate of need and necessity actually been
2 fulfilled yet, or is that why we're here?

3 MR. BILL STORM: No. There are two
4 dockets. For many large energy projects, a utility
5 has to come to the PUC for two approvals. The first
6 approval is a certificate of need approval. And if
7 you remember I was up here in the winter during that
8 nasty snowstorm, we were up here doing a road show
9 to get public input on the environmental report
10 associated with the need.

11 Now, the need is a question of, is the
12 project that Minnesota Power is proposing, is it in
13 the best interest of the ratepayers and the citizens
14 of the state. Is it needed, and if it is needed, is
15 their solution, transmission from hydro, the way to
16 go. That's a docket that is open and is currently
17 moving forward, so it's a year-long process.

18 The next thing that an applicant needs
19 is, if they want to build a transmission line, is
20 they need a route permit. That's a separate docket
21 and a separate process.

22 Now, the two processes can run
23 concurrently. And they are running concurrently in
24 this case. But the utility cannot get a route
25 permit if a need certificate hasn't been granted

1 from the PUC. So the processes can run
2 concurrently, but if they get to the end and the PUC
3 says, no, we don't believe in your need and they
4 shut that down, then all the routing work that the
5 utility has done is their risk. They've done it and
6 it's not going to provide anything. But they can
7 run concurrently and that's what we're doing now.

8 MR. ROBERT WARD: So the certificate of
9 need is still open.

10 MR. BILL STORM: It's still open and the
11 public hearings for the certificate of need, we'll
12 be back up here in October, I think, for the public
13 hearings for the certificate of need.

14 MR. ROBERT WARD: My understanding is the
15 project is to assist MP&L to comply with future
16 requirements and a percentage of power to come from
17 renewable resources. Is that correct?

18 MR. BILL STORM: I'll let MP state their
19 own purpose in need.

20 MR. DAVID MOELLER: To answer your
21 question, Mr. Ward, the project will provide
22 resources for Minnesota Power that are renewables,
23 but they don't count under the state requirements as
24 they stand today, because large hydro projects, or
25 large hydro facilities over 100 megawatts don't

1 count towards the Minnesota Renewable Energy
2 Standard.

3 MR. ROBERT WARD: Okay. So long as
4 you're there, can I ask, you're going to have to
5 come up with a percentage. What percentage is that?
6 Is it 20 percent?

7 MR. DAVID MOELLER: We have to get --
8 there are interim standards, but by 2025 Minnesota
9 Power has to have 25 percent renewable, and with our
10 Bison 4 Wind project that's being constructed in
11 North Dakota right now, we'll be there by the end of
12 this year, we'll be at 25 percent.

13 MR. ROBERT WARD: So that would be the
14 plan, then, the renewable, wind energy.

15 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Right.

16 MR. ROBERT WARD: Okay. So what you're
17 saying is in the field of mitigation of the coal,
18 which is really mitigation of fossil fuel
19 pollutions, this one will not help in your
20 mitigation of the fossil fuel pollutions?

21 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I didn't say that. I
22 think it actually will help in our mitigation of
23 fossil fuels because it will allow us to have
24 baseload resources that are nonfossil fuel-based,
25 they're hydro energy.

1 MR. ROBERT WARD: State that over again.

2 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Sure. It will help
3 us mitigate our fossil fuel use and diversify our
4 generation resources. One of the slides showed how
5 we've gone from being a 95 percent coal utility, to
6 our plan in the future is to be about a third coal,
7 a third natural gas, and a third renewables, which
8 would include Manitoba hydro under that bucket.

9 MR. ROBERT WARD: Thank you. In one of
10 the earlier projected plans that you had showed, and
11 you spoke specifically about route permits, you
12 showed a line that was crossing -- it appeared to be
13 coming right into Grand Rapids, and I'm assuming
14 that's off the table. Is that correct?

15 MR. BILL STORM: Hold on a second. I
16 just want to see if what you're talking about is up
17 here so everybody can see it. Tell me when.

18 MR. ROBERT WARD: Keep going. Okay.
19 Let's stop at any of those.

20 In looking at this drawing, and as you
21 can see it's not specific to any particularity
22 because of the size of the map, and I can understand
23 that. I have some -- a piece of property that
24 currently has a 115 kV line where it's just west of
25 town. And my question is, will any part of this

1 energy transmission cross west of the Skallman
2 Bridge -- where, as you know, we're currently in
3 litigation over an easement -- crossing to the old
4 Ainsworth Plant, and the line hasn't been
5 facilitating power to that site for some time, as
6 Ainsworth obviously has been shuttered. And the
7 Grand Rapids Public Utilities has supplied, I think,
8 a 26 kV in the area.

9 My question is, is there a chance that
10 part of this power will be crossing that line at any
11 time in the future, which is a 115 kV line, which
12 was put in in 1972. And I think, Tracy, as you
13 know, the Public Utilities Commission, State of
14 Minnesota, came into existence in '73. And so that
15 line really was never permitted by the Grand
16 Rapids -- or by the Minnesota Public Utilities
17 Commission. They're tenaciously, of course, hanging
18 on to that line.

19 And my question there is, is there any
20 chance part of this energy -- well, crossings are
21 worth a lot of money. The Public Utilities
22 Commission rules or the environmental rules,
23 whatever, would make a line normally cross at a
24 bridge or a dam or another structure. This is a
25 midstream crossing. And will this line or part of

1 this transmission ultimately cross there?

2 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I'm assuming you're
3 talking about do any of our routes affect that
4 property? Is that what you mean? Where we would
5 ultimately build this line?

6 MR. ROBERT WARD: Yes. Do we ultimately
7 expect to put part of this power across that
8 particular section of line. I mean, it goes nowhere
9 at present.

10 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Right. All of our
11 current routes all come in east of Grand Rapids.

12 MR. ROBERT WARD: Okay.

13 MR. JIM ATKINSON: And well outside of
14 Grand Rapids.

15 MR. ROBERT WARD: Now, I'm assuming if
16 that were to happen, this would take a separate need
17 and necessity routing permit, correct?

18 MR. BILL STORM: If you're saying that
19 there's a transmission line, a 115, for example,
20 line, that predates the Power Plant Siting Act, and
21 if you're saying that they want to upgrade that
22 line, there are mechanisms within the current rule
23 that may require them to seek a permit if they
24 wanted to build a 230 there or a 345 there or a
25 larger line.

1 MR. ROBERT WARD: Anything larger would
2 require this process, is that what you're saying?

3 MR. BILL STORM: If it's a new line,
4 they're going to put a new line there or like
5 parallel it or something, yes. If they wanted to
6 upgrade that line to a 230 or something else, it may
7 also require a route permit.

8 MR. ROBERT WARD: It may, but it wouldn't
9 necessarily?

10 MR. BILL STORM: Yeah. I'd have to look
11 at the exact language in the rule. There is some
12 language about how much you can increase the
13 capacity of a line that's preexisting to the Power
14 Plant Siting Act before you need to, okay, now you
15 need to get a permit for that.

16 MR. ROBERT WARD: Okay. And my concern
17 is, in my case, the court record will show that MP&L
18 had ex parte conversation with the Minnesota Public
19 Utilities Commission. That would be you folks. In
20 my case. And we should all be asking that we have
21 assurances from you folks -- that's documented court
22 record. We should all have assurances from you
23 folks that this is not taking place in any part of
24 this permit.

25 MR. BILL STORM: I believe it's not. You

1 guys okay? Any comment?

2 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah. I just would
3 add that when we started our stakeholder outreach,
4 we had a much broader area. And at one time there
5 was corridors, or broad corridors, that overlapped
6 with the City of Grand Rapids. And subsequently
7 those were eliminated or narrowed out of the scope
8 of what we were considering based on density of
9 homes and that sort of thing.

10 So we are only considering right now the
11 preferred and alternate routes coming into
12 Blackberry Substation 10, 15 miles east of here.

13 MR. ROBERT WARD: I understand. Thank
14 you.

15 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

16 Okay. That gets me out of my cards, so I
17 go to my default position. I'm encouraging you to
18 give me issues, concerns, ask questions. I'm out of
19 cards, so I'm going to go to the show of hands.

20 Is there anyone who would like to speak?

21 Okay, sir, I would ask that you step to
22 the podium, state and spell your name, and ask your
23 question or make your comment.

24 MR. MICHAEL BUNES: It's Michael Bunes,
25 M-I-C-H-A-E-L, B-U-N-E-S.

1 And I would like to speak on -- maybe to
2 the lady from the DNR, I can't remember her name.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Jamie Schrenzel.

4 MR. MICHAEL BUNES: But on the orange
5 route in Lawrence Lake Township, it is going to have
6 to cross the Prairie River between Crooked Lake and
7 Lawrence Lake. And in that area, alongside the
8 river on both sides, is a deer wintering area. And
9 I guess I would like to propose going to the blue
10 route rather than the orange route just because
11 there's a wintering area there. I live right there
12 on the Prairie River. And has that been considered
13 or is it known?

14 MS. JAMIE SCHRENZEL: Thank you for your
15 question. This is Jamie Schrenzel from the
16 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

17 And our early coordination on this
18 project with Minnesota Power did include
19 identification of known deer wintering areas. I
20 don't know off the top of my head if the one you're
21 referring to is or not, it may be helpful for you to
22 identify that in the record. And so that is a
23 factor that was considered in our early
24 coordination, which helped Minnesota Power narrow
25 down their route. And then it's certainly a factor

1 that should be considered in the future, too, in the
2 environmental impact statement. So it sounds like
3 that's a helpful comment maybe to identify on the
4 mapping in the back.

5 MR. MICHAEL BUNES: Okay. Would you like
6 me just to send you a letter, state that?

7 MR. BILL STORM: You can certainly send
8 me a letter. Since you have that local information,
9 if you would see my man G in the back, he will
10 narrow that in on an aerial photo, identify it, and
11 then you'll put your comment on the back of that
12 photo, print it out, and make sure me or Julie gets
13 a copy and you keep a copy for yourself.

14 MR. JIM ATKINSON: It may be that he
15 already has that data layer available and you can
16 just point it out, too.

17 MR. MICHAEL BUNES: Cool. I'll check it
18 out. Thank you.

19 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you very much.
20 Okay. Coming back to the pool.

21 Okay. Sir, if you would please step to
22 the podium, state and spell your name, ask your
23 question or give your comment.

24 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: Sure. My name is
25 Brent Ostlund, B-R-E-N-T, O-S-T-L-U-N-D.

1 And my brother and I have 80 acres up by
2 Wilson Lake. And one question I have is liability.
3 Say, like your -- a tree falls on the 200-foot
4 right-of-way, somebody comes with a snowmobile and
5 hits that tree, who is liable? Obviously, we don't
6 know it's there. We live south of St. Cloud down by
7 Dassel. Who would be the unhappy recipient of that
8 bill?

9 MR. BILL STORM: I don't have the answer
10 to that. I will certainly make sure that comment is
11 captured into the record and discussed.

12 You guys deal with easements all the
13 time, I don't know what the liability around
14 easements is.

15 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I think generally we
16 would have the liability. We've had that issue come
17 up with snowmobiles in the past, we had an issue in
18 Brainerd most recently where that happened. It's
19 Minnesota Power's easement.

20 MR. BILL STORM: So the liability falls
21 on you?

22 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Yes.

23 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: So what about the
24 tree removal, then? Who is --

25 MR. DAVID MOELLER: We are responsible

1 for maintenance and other items along the easement
2 and right-of-way.

3 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: All righty. And for
4 the DNR person. Has there ever been a study on
5 birds or migratory waterfowl, especially, hitting
6 power lines? Especially at, what are they, 150
7 feet? That's about perfect cruising height for a
8 lot of birds.

9 MS. JAMIE SCHRENZEL: Yes. There have
10 been studies, multiple studies on avian collisions
11 with power lines. There are various findings on how
12 much bird diverters -- it's those spirals that you
13 see along what we call the shield wire to deflect
14 lightning strikes up at the top, that's what they
15 usually hit. And so bird diverters can be up to 80
16 percent effective at reducing --

17 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: But not at night.

18 MS. JAMIE SCHRENZEL: At nighttime, there
19 are some that kind of glow in the dark and that's a
20 consideration. But, yes, it can be more of a
21 challenge in fog or at night and so siting is very
22 important for that reason.

23 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: And how about like
24 for moose habitat, things like that, that what we
25 have back there is remote.

1 MS. JAMIE SCHRENZEL: Right.

2 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: And we have seen
3 moose evidence, we've never -- I think our neighbors
4 have seen them, but we've never seen moose or such.

5 MS. JAMIE SCHRENZEL: Generally,
6 fragmentation of native habitats is not a good
7 thing. So you create what's called an edge effect,
8 where even, even past the impact, there's an impact
9 on the internal woodland species. And so you can
10 have an impact on what types of species use the
11 area. You tend to have more what we call generalist
12 species, which could be invasive species or could be
13 just more of what you would see generally in a more
14 populated area, versus rare species tend to use
15 larger blocks of habitat. So that is definitely a
16 consideration that the DNR has in mind when we make
17 comments.

18 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: Um-hum. All right.
19 I think that does it.

20 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. The environmental
21 impact statement will certainly discuss the impacts
22 to flora and fauna that this transmission line would
23 have.

24 MR. BRENT OSTLUND: Well, like, when you
25 were talking, too, right north of us, and I'm going

1 to discuss it with the computer people also. But
2 right north of us they're going to be logging off
3 that whole section. And I believe that's -- is that
4 state land? Huh. Is Blandin up there? Well,
5 anyway, it's public land, basically.

6 And there is nobody, I don't think, from
7 like the blue spruce camp, that's a bunch of guys
8 off to the west of us, all the way over to Lake
9 Tuber (phonetic), that's all open land and nobody
10 owns that. Where it would hook on and then where
11 the orange line cuts down towards the south of us
12 there.

13 Anyway, I'm going to sit and talk with
14 those people to bring that up.

15 MR. BILL STORM: Excellent. Thank you
16 very much.

17 Okay. Coming back to hands. Anybody
18 want to make a comment, ask a question, rant? No?
19 Okay.

20 Oop, there we go. It's Leonhardt (sic)
21 again. How are you doing?

22 MR. RICHARD LIBBEY: Good.

23 MR. BILL STORM: Please state and spell
24 your name.

25 MR. RICHARD LIBBEY: I am Richard Libbey,

1 L-I-B-B-E-Y. I was here at this afternoon's meeting
2 so I expressed most of my concerns there about
3 impacts of putting a new line through green land
4 country or through Balsam Township, an area that
5 doesn't have any existing lines.

6 And just for your information, I have
7 some maps here of two existing power lines that are
8 possible routes that they could maybe follow as
9 alternatives. One is to the east about three or
10 four miles that follows the west side of Highway 65.
11 And then there's another one to the west of Highway
12 38 that comes in and crosses over to Cohasset. So,
13 you know, we're talking about orange and blue all
14 the time, but it's a possibility that maybe if the
15 PUC accepts this as an alternate route that that
16 would be a possibility, which would mean you people
17 wouldn't have had to come to this meeting but other
18 people would. But if you'd like to see a map of the
19 power lines that exist, I've got them.

20 Okay. Thanks.

21 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Richard.

22 Okay. Coming back to the pool. Anybody
23 who wants to ask a question, make a comment, rant?

24 Okay. Remember, the comment period is
25 August 15th. My man G and Carol are back there,

1 they'll be back there as long as you want to help
2 you work out any issues or to show any feature or
3 something that you're concerned about.

4 I'm going to come back to the audience
5 now. Anybody want to speak? Going once -- oh, yes.
6 Great.

7 Would you please step forward and state
8 and spell your name, please? I'm -- I don't know
9 what I am anymore. It's getting late, it's been a
10 long week.

11 MS. CHERYL BUNES: My name is Cheryl
12 Bunes, C-H-E-R-Y-L, B-U-N-E-S.

13 I am just listening. With the
14 certificate of need, I'm addressing this to
15 Minnesota Power because of my concerns for the
16 environment and for the people.

17 You say that by 2025 you need to have --
18 meet, you need to meet a percentage, and that's 25
19 percent of renewable. Okay. And the wind energy is
20 providing that 25 percent?

21 MR. DAVID MOELLER: It's providing
22 probably about 20 percent. We have existing hydro
23 facilities, like the Thompson facility in Jay Cooke
24 State Park and other ones, as well as some biomass
25 facilities like here in Blandin and other places

1 that provide the other 5 percent, but wind will be
2 about 20 percent of that 25.

3 MS. CHERYL BUNES: I guess my question
4 is, you have almost met that percentage. So I am
5 wondering why you would need to have such a large --
6 have this large, massive power line come down from
7 Manitoba that would impact so many people and the
8 environment. And I'm just wondering why such a
9 large project when you've just about met that
10 percentage.

11 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Sure. I think we see
12 them as kind of complementary, where we want to meet
13 the renewable requirement that the state has set
14 out, but we also want to diversify our overall
15 generation mix so we have less coal, less other
16 generation resources that do -- that also impact the
17 environment.

18 And as we have more requirements,
19 especially from the federal government, to lessen
20 our dependency on coal, we see hydro as a clean
21 renewable resource, even if it doesn't count under
22 the state requirement for the 25 by '25 percent --
23 or 25 by '25 requirements. But we still see that
24 meeting other national requirements that we're going
25 to have to meet that the EPA and others are setting

1 forth for not just Minnesota Power, but utilities
2 across the nation.

3 MS. CHERYL BUNES: And the hydro, the
4 only hydro is in Manitoba?

5 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Yes. Minnesota Power
6 is the largest hydro resource, or hydro generator
7 utility in Minnesota, and we have about 100
8 megawatts of hydro resources up on the St. Louis and
9 the Mississippi. And up by Ely, there's another
10 small generator up there. But that -- and there's a
11 few others throughout the state, but there's not
12 other resources available for Minnesota for the
13 hydro side. I mean, there's wind, there's solar,
14 there's biomass, there's other renewable resources
15 to develop, but not hydro. And so to get large
16 hydro we have to go to Manitoba Hydro.

17 MS. CHERYL BUNES: Okay. And you
18 can't -- and you need the hydro versus, you know,
19 you can't get enough from the bio and the wind
20 energy to meet your demand, or that percentage?

21 MR. DAVID MOELLER: From a percentage
22 standpoint, we kind of need more than just energy.
23 We also need to have enough capacity, it's called,
24 so that when large customers or all customers turn
25 their lights on it's available around the clock.

1 And hydro -- and this isn't all of our resources,
2 but we have a 250 megawatt agreement approved by the
3 Public Utilities Commission, and we're finalizing
4 another 133 megawatt agreement. And Minnesota Power
5 is about 1,800 megawatts as a utility, so this is
6 not -- it doesn't solve everything for us, but it's
7 a major component of how we have generation
8 resources going into the future. But instead of
9 building generation, we're building transmission to
10 deliver those resources, if that makes sense.

11 MS. CHERYL BUNES: Yes. I think
12 that's -- I have concerns, of course, because I live
13 on the Prairie River and in the community that I
14 live, we have that small -- the small business
15 community of Balsam Township that's near us. And I
16 just feel a massive power line may affect the
17 growth, or the people, and just the growth of that
18 community. And I guess that's --

19 MR. BILL STORM: Okay.

20 MS. CHERYL BUNES: -- pretty much it.

21 MR. BILL STORM: All right. Well, thank
22 you, Cheryl.

23 MS. CHERYL BUNES: Thank you very much.
24 I appreciate it.

25 MR. BILL STORM: Thanks.

1 Remember, even if you spoke tonight, the
2 comment period is open until August 15th. If you
3 think of something as we move towards that date,
4 please jot it down, get it to me. If, as you think
5 of something, maybe an issue or maybe an alternative
6 and you need some help in developing that, all my
7 information is here, it's on some of the handouts,
8 certainly contact me. Give me a call, and if I can
9 I'll walk you through it. Okay?

10 Thank you, Cheryl.

11 MS. CHERYL BUNES: Thank you.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Yes, sir. Please come
13 on up to the podium, state and spell your name.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROY PROCOPIO: My name is Roy
16 Procopio, it's R-O-Y, P-R-O-C-O-P-I-O.

17 I have one question. And it's probably
18 cost-prohibitive for you when you're putting this
19 big line through. But when you're coming down
20 through you have this run fairly straight in areas,
21 this line. When you get to a person's property, if
22 he's -- you're going through tax-forfeited property,
23 Blandin land, whatever, mining company property,
24 when you get down to where a guy owns an 80 or 120
25 or whatever, if there's tax-forfeited land adjoining

1 his property is it cost-prohibitive to put a bend in
2 the line and go around his property and then come
3 back?

4 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Every angle structure
5 is expensive, but that's not to say that we don't do
6 that for different things. And I think you would
7 see on our routes that we've made several changes in
8 direction not because of engineering things, but for
9 constraints and to minimize effects on, among other
10 things, on landowners. So it does happen.

11 MR. ROY PROCOPIO: I see on these
12 corridors that in some areas there's a lot of people
13 living where the corridor goes through, and a couple
14 miles away there's a lot of tax-forfeit property.
15 So it was just a question I wanted to propose.
16 Because, to me, instead of lowering somebody's
17 property values and having a lot of upset people for
18 a line that is not going to affect any of us in a
19 positive way, because we're not on Minnesota Power,
20 but you have to run this line so you can supply the
21 cities and the towns.

22 Okay. We live out in the country. We
23 live there because we don't have all this stuff,
24 billboards and everything all over. So a power line
25 an eighth of a mile from my house is going to affect

1 how I feel about living there and how everybody else
2 feels about living there. And if I'm lucky it'll be
3 that far away.

4 But I can just say that I know it's going
5 to go through and there's nothing we can do probably
6 to stop it. But I think that looking at both
7 routes, something could be done. It would cost you
8 a little more, but something could be done to
9 appease a lot more people.

10 And that's all I have to say about it.

11 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

12 Okay. Coming back to the pool once
13 again. Remember, August 15th, your comments. You
14 can always contact me. We do have the GIS guys in
15 the back.

16 I'm going to come to the pool one more
17 time. Anybody want to ask a question, make a
18 comment, rant? Okay. No? Going once? Twice?

19 Okay. I really appreciate you coming
20 out. This process doesn't work if the people don't
21 participate and share their local knowledge with us
22 and their concerns.

23 Please utilize the GIS stations, even if
24 it's just to look at your property maybe with a
25 couple layers over it with transmission lines or

1 whatever, but use the tools that we have here.

2 Again, you can always contact me and I
3 can help you with anything.

4 Thanks for coming out, have a good
5 evening, a safe drive home.

6 (Meeting concluded at 7:48.)

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